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**Public Release**  
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“...Without partiality or prejudice.” Four words from the Oath of Office that every law enforcement officer has sworn to uphold. For most, these four words are the deepest and most meaningful words that have ever left their mouths. For others, these four words represent a vow that they failed to honor. In doing so, they have failed themselves, their professions, and our society. A failure for which there is no justification. A failure that continues to lead to an ever-growing disparity, as it pertains to the lives, freedoms, and rights, for people of color, and disproportionately African American men.

More than a year ago, the Cheverly Police Department visited the National Museum of African American History and Culture as part of its commitment to understanding not just the relationship between African Americans and law enforcement but to begin to better understand the African American perspective in order to make a difference.

Shortly after that visit, I addressed our community regarding our nation’s history, and moments in time that, regrettably, I cannot change but whose truths and lessons I continue to incorporate into my values. Today, I address you again, but this time, it is not about the past. This time it is about the present, the here and now, and our future. This time, it is about humanity.

Today, like many other public servants, I walk with my head held low. Low for David McAtee. Low for Breonna Taylor. Low for George Floyd.

George Floyd’s murder at the hands of police officers is appalling, tragic, and unacceptable. For 8 minutes and 46 seconds not just one, but three law enforcement officers, stood by as a human pleaded and gasped for the right to breath, ultimately resulting in the unthinkable, his death. In response, the nation mourns.

During this mourning, I can’t help but to think of all the failures that must have occurred that ultimately resulted in George Floyd’s death. Was this the first time these officers engaged in misconduct, on or off duty? Did their supervisors, or fellow officers, feel empowered to report procedural, ethical, or immoral violations. Did the department possess files or documentation depicting the lack of character and/or service of each involved officer? If so, I must ask, why were these officers, officers? If even one answer to any of these questions is “yes”, we should be asking a lot more questions and demanding a lot more investigations, terminations, and prosecutions.



As a law enforcement executive, I'm encouraging the law enforcement community to ask themselves these same questions. Do we empower our officers to report violations of any kind, committed by individuals at any level? Do we provide our officers with the tools and training needed to meet the standards of the communities we serve? Do we ensure that the individuals we hire for our departments continuously uphold the oath they swear by?

Law enforcement officers, supervisors, and leaders must do better. We must hold one another accountable and speak up for the rights of those for whom we have sworn to protect. When we see something, we have a duty to do something. We must continue to acknowledge the misdeeds of our past and present, and progressively work to build a better future with a focus on the sanctity of life, while affirming that black lives do matter.

Many of you have heard me speak to my definition of community policing, co-produced public safety. I wholeheartedly believe that public safety can only be achieved through diverse and comprehensive collaboration and teamwork. We must work together to establish policies and procedures that aim to reduce crime, through improving relationships and building trust. These policies and procedures must support the mission of those we call to serve and reflect our community's values.

We must stand side by side, but while we are there, we must remember that regardless of how much we come to respect and/or value one's perspective, it is impossible to truly understand their experience.

My heartfelt condolences to all who knew and loved Mr. Floyd. May he forever remain in our hearts and may he rest in peace.

In my closing words, while I do not want to detract from the victims, or those who grieve them, I do want to take a moment to speak personally to the community. It is with great understanding that I acknowledge that there are some who have expressed their disappointment in my response, or lack thereof, as it pertains to these events. For that, I am deeply sorry. These events did not go unnoticed by me. I had begun my response to these travesties, but during its creation, I realized that my voice and personal sentiments began to get lost. I was receiving feedback and suggestions of what my response should be and how my response should be written. My response was beginning to be bogged down by politics and losing its authenticity. I lost belief in what I was writing and lost focus.

If you recall, one of the major questions I posed to law enforcement executives was, to a degree, whether their subordinates are empowered to question? Luckily, I provide that empowerment to my staff, and for that I am thankful. It was from this empowerment that I was reminded that I wasn't placed in this position, nor do members of my department only support me, because of politics. The men and women of this department are here because they believe in me. I am in this



position because the community believes in my genuineness and transparency. It is with this understanding that I sit down now, completely dismissing the aforementioned politics and suggestions, and write this. Make no mistake, during this time of pain and sorrow, I remain focused on my role as a 21<sup>st</sup> century, law enforcement executive and the fact that I have been entrusted the privilege to serve and make a difference. It is in that place, that I find the motivation and pride to play a role in ensuring procedural justice and equity in policing.